

CITYTIMES

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Amel Makkawi, a true art aficionado and promoter of diversity, is the quintessential by-product of what Dubai aims to become. Poised, confident, and warm, she hopes to bring people together through the power of ideas at her new art gallery

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Amel Makkawi: 'I would like to see a school of fine arts here in the UAE'

'Art is my pilgrimage'

Amel Makkawi fulfils her dream of opening her own art gallery and believes the country is at the forefront in promoting arts and culture

Mohamad Kadry
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SHE REVELS IN her new space - 1200 square metres of pure art bliss. Amel Makkawi has been dreaming of opening her own art gallery for years, and after a struggling journey her dream has finally been realised. ArtSawa (Arabic for Art Together) is a staggering former warehouse that dwarfs the bright colours and tall monuments that adorn its walls and floors. It is incomparable to anything that has been done in Dubai, and is meant to stand as a testament to the true vision of turning the city into the region's premier cultural hub. Makkawi, a true art aficionado and promoter of diversity, is the quintessential by-product of what Dubai aims to become. Poised, confident, and warm, she is opening her doors to the public in hopes of bringing people together through the power of ideas.



Amel Makkawi believes Dubai has the vision to become the art centre of the region

Q:

Who will you be featuring here at ArtSawa?

fine arts school. Since I was a teenager I have been exposed to art and continued to expose myself to the art world. Art is my pilgrimage. I have been in contact with a lot of artists and I like to be around them because it gives me a sort of oxygen. They are freethinking and always developing new concepts. **Who will you be featuring here at ArtSawa?** Initially we are featuring 13 artists who have believed in me and supported me. They are from all over the region and there will be much more to come. I'm always looking for excellent quality art and talent, not only the well-known in Dubai. I like introducing fresh blood, those artists who have not had the opportunity to really showcase their talents. My vision is to make you think and see a different point of view. **You have lived in Dubai for almost a decade. How have you seen the art scene evolve and change?**

A:

Initially we are featuring 13 artists who have believed in me and supported me

It has changed dramatically in the good sense. I got this feeling a few years ago when I wanted to open up my gallery, but I think Dubai was not ready for it at the time. A lot of things are changing here. I think that Dubai now has the vision to become the art centre of the region. People change, mentalities change, and Dubai is changing with it. I don't know if it is a real factor, but when people no longer have the feeling of being a temporary expat, your vision and concept of being an expat is completely different. When you are living somewhere and you know you have to leave in two or three years, you don't demand as much from your city. But when you get the opportunity to settle, your vision changes. Something is changing dramatically in this city because we no longer feel forced to live in transit. **Why do you see Dubai developing as the centre of culture in the region?**

How long have you been working towards the dream of having your own art gallery? The truth is it was not easy but I kept going and believing in it. It was a long journey but I am happy with the result.

What were you involved in before founding this gallery?

I was doing frescoes in Lebanon for a time, and involved in a French school here in Dubai. The kids and family were taking a lot of my time, but once I found the perfect space for my gallery, I was set. The truth is when my husband settled with his company, I felt that we were finally anchored here so I could finally set the course for this dream. I have spent my life being an expat, living in South America, Africa, Europe, and of course the Middle East.

Why did you decide to open an art gallery in Dubai?

With my education, we were always involved with the

FC Barcelona Soccer School opens for Dubai children

WORLD-RENOWNED FOOTBALL club, FC Barcelona, has announced the commencement of its soccer training programme for children in Dubai. The FCBarcelona soccer school has kicked off at Raffles International School in Jumeirah; a move that means the city's youngsters now have access to specialised football instruction from the sport's finest coaches.

FCBarcelona is busy teaching students the techniques that will help them develop into accomplished and confident performers, both on and off the pitch. The school's Technical Director, Mr. Josep Gombau, holds the Level 3 Soccer Coaching Badge, the premier license awarded by the Catalan FA. The award entitles him to coach at all levels; from grassroots standard right up to international level.

FCBarcelona takes place during the evenings on weekdays, with a match day being held on Thursdays and Fridays. Students learn the theory and practice of the latest football techniques, including ball control, dead ball skills, tactics and team work. The school has been brought to Dubai in association with ProAct World and Styx Sports Marketing and will run through the season until June 2009, before recommencing in September. It is open to all Dubai Children between the ages of four to 16 and any parent interested in enrolling their child should contact 04-3915038 for further information.



Be a winner with City Times

DED official Abdul Latif Mohamad Al Marzoki picks the Sharaf DG contest winners for this week. The winners are Ram Kaji Dixit, T.S. Ahammedunny and Santhosha Kundapur

Photos: Kieran Prasad/Gilroy Britto/supplied



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City Times in association with Sharaf DG is giving you the opportunity to walk away with the trendiest pocket pc phone, i-mate JAMA. All you have to do is answer the question on the coupon and email it to contestct@gmail.com or mail the coupon to us at City Times Contest, P.O. box 11243, Dubai. Last date for entries is November 1.

*Only one entry per contestant. Winners must collect their prize within a week after the announcement from Sharaf DG-Ibn Battuta Mall, Times Square Centre, Deira City Centre.




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